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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[26 May 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Situation in the Central African Republic

Society for Threatened Peoples is deeply concerned about the stigmatization and dehumanization of the Muslim minority in Central African Republic (CAR). After the Interim President Michel Djotodia was forced to step down in January 2014, the attacks against the Muslim population have escalated and are overwhelming in their brutality. Tensions escalated in the capital Bangui and most of the 80,000 Muslim inhabitants of the city have fled to the north of CAR or to neighboring states. The failure of international as well as African peacekeepers and regular armed forces to provide protection for minority people has caused an exodus which has been shocking and might constitute a crime against humanity. The exodus of Muslim merchants has caused a breakdown of the economy which has devastating effects on the search for sustainable peace and respect of basis human rights in CAR.

There is no justification for ethnic hatred and the deliberate targeting of an entire religious community despite the fact that Seleka fighters were mostly Muslim and have committed atrocious human rights violations against Christians in the years 2013 and 2014. Nobody has the right to vengeance and it is up to the judicial system to end impunity for crimes committed by Seleka fighters.

Outside of the capital Bangui state and law authorities are mostly non-existent. In most towns and villages there is nobody to implement law and to make sure that every massive violation of human rights will be brought to court. Most schools have remained closed in the past six months. Public life has come to a halt. Instead of justice, violence and terror are prevailing. Anti-Balaka militias have imposed their rule in most rural areas in western CAR. They have started to chase all Muslims in the regions they are controlling. After chasing those citizens of another faith, they are now targeting other minorities such as the indigenous Pygmy people. There is a desperate need for law and order especially on behalf of minority people who are protected by nobody.

Furthermore, CAR authorities should investigate the background of recent lootings and massacres in villages where no policemen or regular soldiers were able to provide protection to the civilian population and could ensure the respect of law. Nearly every week, there are new massacres or politically motivated violence. Every week, up to 90 people die in these incidents.

There is no real progress made in reconciliation between Christians and Muslims despite official claims that so-called programs have been launched. It should be of utmost priority for the government of CAR to intensify credible initiatives for reconciliation and to ensure a common understanding on basic human rights of minorities.

The crisis in CAR needs more international commitment and engagement to promote good governance and the respect of law. If the international community continues to ignore the horrendous extent of violence, the conflict might destabilize the entire region of Central Africa.

Society for Threatened Peoples calls on the UN Human Rights Council to urge the Government of CAR to:

- Ensure a better protection from violence for the civilian population especially for minority people,
- End impunity,
- Concentrate on rebuilding public life and the respect of law,
- Disarm all militias and to build up the state security sector,
- Enhance reconciliation efforts in order to overcome violence and mistrust.